# HEALTHY Grocery Store Shopping Guide

**G**rocery stores, as with other forms of retail, rely heavily on marketing to influence your purchases. Unfortunately, this can create a challenge when shopping for the healthiest foods, because the marketing often promotes convenience foods, popular items that may have virtually no nutrition, and products that bring in higher profits, regardless of their nutritional value.

It's important to understand how to maneuver through the aisles of your local grocery in order to get out with a cart-full of healthy goodies.

**Follow these tips to help you choose nutritious foods that your family will love:**

1. **Shop with a list.** Plan ahead by putting together a list before you enter the grocery store. Separate your list by area of the grocery store. This will allow you to work your way through the store without becoming distracted by unhealthy goods.

2. **Shop the perimeter.** The perimeter of the store is where you'll find fresh fruits and vegetables, fish and meat, bread and dairy. The bulk of your grocery shopping should be done in these areas, where you can choose fresh and healthy food.

    - Not all food in the perimeter of the store is automatically healthy, but fresh foods from the dairy, deli, bakery and butcher areas of the store are generally more nutritious than boxed and frozen products.

    - In the fresh food areas, ***look for organic produce, meats from free-range animals that weren't treated with harmful hormones or fed genetically modified foods, and products made from non-genetically-modified grains.***

3. **Follow your list.** When you do venture into the interior aisles of the store, only buy the specific items that are on your list.

    - Try to avoid pre-packaged items, frozen items, and items that are advertised for children, as these tend to be the unhealthiest options in the grocery store.

4. **Shop for real foods.** Choose 100% fruit juices, 100% whole grains and foods that contain as little processing or as few additives as you can. You can add more sugar, salt or seasonings if you like later.

5. **Read the ingredients.** ***Avoid foods that contain the following:***

- Artificial ingredients
- Ingredients you don 't recognize or can't pronounce
- Foods that contain high numbers of ingredients

The best way to keep yourself from eating junk foods is to simply never buy them or bring them home. ***Smart shopping at the grocery store is one of the best things you can do for your family.*** When the bulk of your groceries are fresh, wholesome foods, you'll find that they taste better, too, as well as provide the nutrition your body craves.